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2 December 2019

## **Brewers welcome revised National Alcohol Strategy**

THE Brewers Association of Australia (Brewers) welcomes the revised and finalised National Alcohol Strategy 2019-2028, which strikes a balanced in focusing on alcohol harm, while recognising the vast majority of people drink responsibly.

The final Strategy gets the balance right by recognising the major improvements, achieved over many decades, which have seen Australians adopt a more moderate and safer drinking culture.

Alcohol consumption per capita has been declining in Australia decade-on-decade. The most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows alcohol consumption is at a 50-year low in Australia and just half of what it was in the 1960s.

The ABS reports that 84% of Australians drink within recommended guidelines and that 82% of 12-17 year-olds in Australia do not drink alcohol at all. Those that have tried a drink are doing so later, and drinking less, than ever before.

Given Australians are already among the most heavily taxed in the world when it comes a beer, the vast majority of Aussies who drink responsibly will be heartened by Minister Hunt's assurance today that the Government considers "Australia's current alcohol taxation settings are appropriate and has no plans to make any changes".

Consumers will be relieved. The draft Strategy had originally contained a number of proposals that could have led to increased taxes, higher prices and restricted access.

We acknowledge that harm from alcohol still persists and all stakeholders should continue to work together to reduce harmful consumption in a whole-of-society approach. We welcome the opportunity to work with the community further, building on our track record of responsible marketing and world-leading investments in alcohol education and culture change.

To that end, we are pleased by the decision of federal and state governments not to proceed with a proposal in the draft Strategy to exclude industry from the important conversation on how further to reduce harm.

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